



## DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

BOBBY JINDAL  
GOVERNOR

PEGGY M. HATCH  
SECRETARY

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**Contact:** Jean Kelly

**Phone:** 225-219-3966

### **DEQ announces new Regional Enforcement Actions Policy**

**BATON ROUGE** – The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality has announced a new policy that will enhance and streamline enforcement actions at the regional level. The process will greater utilize the capabilities of legal and enforcement personnel across DEQ's six regional offices located throughout the state

The new policy will enable DEQ's regional offices to manage a full range of enforcement action capabilities without having to channel each action through DEQ headquarters. Implementation of this policy will focus on situations where the violation is an immediate threat or has the potential threat to human health or the environment; immediate action is required to stop the violation; the gravity of the violation exceeds minor in nature; or if the resulting enforcement action can be processed and delivered to the respondent within 20 business days.

Examples of violations that may be addressed with enforcement actions include water discharges, air releases or waste disposal situations where there could be an immediate threat to human health or the environment; if there is an impending threat of a spill or release; or if there is a recurring violation. A DEQ inspector will determine whether the violation can be corrected promptly and whether or not an enforcement action is warranted.

“By enabling regional offices greater autonomy in the enforcement of environmental regulations, those offices will be able to manage environmental policies and actions at the local level without having to directly consult with headquarters for each case,” said DEQ Secretary Peggy Hatch. “This new policy will enable us to increase environmental compliance at the local level, thereby creating quicker turnarounds on certain critical enforcement actions. With this change in policy, DEQ is becoming more efficient by utilizing our regional experts to their fullest potential while eliminating lag time in the enforcement process to better serve the citizens of the state. ”